ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code

Change Request Number: 2020-030 (completed by Registration authority)

Date: 2020-8-13

Primary Person submitting request: Luther Hon

Affiliation: SIL Nigeria

E-mail address: luther_hon at sil dot org

Names, affiliations and email addresses of additional supporters of this request:

John Enene, Director for Luke Initiative for Scripture Translation (LIST), Jos, Nigeria, Enene Enene <enene_enene at listng dot org>

Ali Robinson, the Academic Officer, Sil Nigeria, Ali Robinson (<ali_robinson at sil dot org>) Postal address for primary contact person for this request (in general, email correspondence will be used): luther_hon at sil dot org

PLEASE NOTE: This completed form will become part of the public record of this change request and the history of the ISO 639-3 code set and will be posted on the ISO 639-3 website.

Types of change requests

This form is to be used in requesting changes (whether creation, modification, or deletion) to elements of the ISO 639 Codes for the representation of names of languages — Part 3: Alpha-3 code for comprehensive coverage of languages. The types of changes that are possible are to 1) modify the reference information for an existing code element, 2) propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group; 3) retire a code element from use, including merging its scope of denotation into that of another code element, 4) split an existing code element into two or more new language code elements, or 5) create a new code element for a previously unidentified language variety. Fill out section 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 below as appropriate, and the final section documenting the sources of your information. The process by which a change is received, reviewed and adopted is summarized on the final page of this form.

Type of change proposed (check one):

1. □ Modify reference information for an existing language code element
2. □ Propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group
3. □ Retire a language code element from use (duplicate or non-existent)
4. □ Split a language code element into two or more new code elements
5. □ Create a code element for a previously unidentified language

For proposing a change to an existing code element, please identify:

Affected ISO 639-3 identifier: [nbr]

Associated reference name: Numana
1. **Modify an existing language code element**
   (a) What are you proposing to change:
      - ☐ Language reference name; generally this is changed only if it is erroneous; if usage is shifting to a new preferred form, the new form may be added (next box)
      - ☐ Language additional names
      - ☐ Language type (living, extinct, historical, etc.)
      - ☐ Language scope (individual language or macrolanguage)
   (b) What new value(s) do you propose:
   (c) Rationale for change:

2. **Propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group**
   (a) For an existing Macrolanguage, what change to its individual language membership do you propose:
   (b) Rationale for change:

   For a new Macrolanguage proposal, please also complete the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequest.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”), which must also be submitted to fully document the intended meaning for the new macrolanguage.

3. **Retire a language code element from use**
   (a) Reason for change:
      - ☐ There is no evidence that the language exists.
      - ☐ This is equivalent to another ISO 639-3 language.
   (b) If equivalent with another code element, with which ISO 639-3 code element (identifier and name) is it equivalent:
   (c) Rationale for change:

4. **Expand the denotation of a code element through merging of one or more code elements**
   (a) List the languages (identifier and name) to be merged into this code element and retired from use:
   (b) Rationale for change
5. Split a language code element into two or more code elements

(a) List the languages into which this code element should be split:

(b) Numana and Aninka. This split will be treated a creation of Aninka, rather than a split of Numana, as the split off portion is just 1% of the total population of Numana.

By the language identification criteria set forth in ISO 639-3, the simple fact of distinct identities is not enough to assign separate identifiers. The criteria are defined in the standard as follows:

For this part of ISO 639, judgments regarding when two varieties are considered to be the same or different languages are based on a number of factors, including linguistic similarity, intelligibility, a common literature (traditional or written), a common writing system, the views of users concerning the relationship between language and identity, and other factors. The following basic criteria are followed:

● Two related varieties are normally considered varieties of the same language if users of each variety have inherent understanding of the other variety (that is, can understand based on knowledge of their own variety without needing to learn the other variety) at a functional level.
● Where intelligibility between varieties is marginal, the existence of a common literature or of a common ethnolinguistic identity with a central variety that both understand can be strong indicators that they should nevertheless be considered varieties of the same language.
● Where there is enough intelligibility between varieties to enable communication, the existence of well-established distinct ethnolinguistic identities can be a strong indicator that they should nevertheless be considered to be different languages.

Referring to the criteria given above, give the rationale for splitting the existing code element into two or more languages:

A. The Aninka said “…we are different from the Numana and we speak a separate language from Numana. Although some of us have learnt to speak Numana, but most of us don’t understand it”. The implication of this statement is that the Aninka cannot be served by any literature written in Numana.

B. The claim above can be proven by the lexical similarity results between two Numana dialects and Aninka below:

**Lexical similarity analysis results for Numana and Aninka and Interpretations**
Using the Blair’s method; the more liberal and strict one, a comparison of 348 words was made between these three languages. However, 12 words were excluded as a result of it being Hausa words, consequently, 336 words were the available sample for the comparison.

*The comparison result using the Liberal and Strict Blair’s methods*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numana-Numbu</th>
<th>Aninka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44 – 48%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
According to Blair in “Survey on a shoestring” (1996), “If word lists are less than sixty percent similar, then the speech varieties are referred to as ‘different languages’”. Also in typical SIL surveys, comparisons lower than 70% are considered different languages. We would expect comprehension between the languages would be insufficient for clear communication.

Consequently, from the results shown above, these languages are definitely different. Their numbering system are similar. Although it should be pointed out that during the comparison between these languages, differences in words at times occurred in the addition or subtraction of prefixes or suffixes. These seem to be different languages and are spoken differently.

C. Back in 2008 a Recorded Text Testing (RTT) was conducted on some Aninka subjects, who had a mean score of 85% on Numana story. With this score, it may seem easy to hastily conclude that the Aninka understand Numana thus Aninka is a dialect of Numana. However, the result had a high standard deviation of 16%, which clearly indicates how bilingual the Aninka are in Numana.

Besides, it was not that the Aninka subjects were involved in a conversation or interaction test on Numana, it was just a short Numana story with only ten comprehension questions, which were responded to by only 9 Aninka subjects. This is not enough indicator to categorize Aninka as a dialect of Numana.

D. The Aninka strongly identify their people as Aninka not Numana.

E. They identify their language as Aninka (or Ninka or Nka), not Numana.

F. The Aninka traced their origin in Toro, Bauchi State, while the Numana traced their origin in Zaria, Kaduna State. With knowledge of their separate origins and separate historical identities the Aninka wrote a petition for a separate Sanga District to be carved out of Gwantu District, which they are sharing with the Numana. Though the Aninka live alongside the Numana, but they have such strong resistance to being referred to as the Numana.

Based on the linguistic and social-political factors which are expressed above, we are calling for a split of Aninka from being documented as a dialect of Numana to being a separate language with a separate ISO code.

(c) Does the language code element to be split represent a major language in which there already exists a significant body of literature and research? Are there contexts in which all the proposed separate languages may still be considered the same language—as in having a common linguistic identity, a shared (or undistinguished) body of literature, a written form in common, etc.? If so, please comment.

No existence of a significant body of literature and based on the strong view point of the Aninka that they are socially, linguistically culturally and historically different from the Numana and their language, it is rare to find a context in which Numana and Aninka may still be considered as the same language.

Besides, lexical similarity results between the two languages show that they are actually separate languages.
In order to complete the change request, the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”) must also be submitted for each new identifier that is to be created. That step can be deferred until this form has been processed by the ISO 639-3 registrar.

6. Create a new language code element

(a) Name of missing language: Aninka

(b) State the case that this language is not the same as or has not been included within any language that already has an identifier in ISO 639-3:
   The Aninka said “…we are different from the Numana and we speak a separate language from Numana. Although some of us have learnt to speak Numana, but most of us don’t understand it” The implication of this statement is that the Aninka cannot be served by any literature written in Numana.

(c) The claim above can be proven by the lexical similarity results between two Numana dialects and Aninka below:

**Lexical similarity analysis results for Numana and Aninka and Interpretations**

Using the Blair’s method; the more liberal and strict one, a comparison of 348 words was made between these three languages. However, 12 words were excluded as a result of it been Hausa words, consequently, 336 words were the available sample for the comparison.

| Lexical similarity comparison result using the Liberal and Strict Blair’s methods |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                               | Numana-Numbu        | Aninka              |
| 44 – 48%                      |                     |                     |
| 41 – 44%                      | 40 – 44%            | Numana-Gbantu       |

According to Blair in “Survey on a shoestring” (1996), “If word lists are less than sixty percent similar, then the speech varieties are referred to as ‘different languages’”. Also in typical SIL surveys, comparisons lower than 70% are considered different languages. We would expect comprehension between the languages would be insufficient for clear communication.

Consequently, from the results shown above, these languages are definitely different. Their numbering system are similar. Although it should be pointed out that during the comparison between these languages, differences in words at times occurred in the addition or subtraction of prefixes or suffixes. These seem to be different languages and are spoken differently.

(d) Back in 2008 a Recorded Text Testing (RTT) was conducted on some Aninka subjects, who had a mean score of 85% on Numana story. With this score, it may seem easy to hastily conclude that the Aninka understand Numana thus Aninka is a dialect of Numana. However, the result had a high standard deviation of 16%, which clearly indicates how bilingual the Aninka are in Numana.

Besides, it was not that the Aninka subjects were involved in a conversation or interaction test on Numana, it was just a short Numana story with only ten comprehension questions, which were
responded to by only 9 Aninka subjects. This is not enough indicator to categorize Aninka as a dialect of Numana.

(e) The Aninka strongly identify their people as Aninka not Numana.

(f) They identify their language as Aninka (or Ninka or Nka), not Numana.

(g) The Aninka traced their origin in Toro, Bauchi State, while the Numana traced their origin in Zaria, Kaduna State. With knowledge of their separate origins and separate historical identities the Aninka wrote a petition for a separate Sanga District to be carved out of Gwantu District, which they are sharing with the Numana. Though the Aninka live alongside the Numana, but they have such strong resistance to being referred to as the Numana.

   Based on the linguistic and social-political factors which are expressed above, we are calling for a split of Aninka from being documented as a dialect of Numana to being a separate language with a separate ISO code.

(c) There is no existence of a significant body of literature and based on the strong view point of the Aninka that they are socially, linguistically culturally and historically different from the Numana and their language, it is rare to find a context in which Numana and Aninka may still be considered as the same language. Besides, lexical similarity results between the two languages show that they are actually separate languages.

In order to complete the change request, the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequest.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”) must also be submitted to more fully document the new language.

Sources of information

Please use whichever of the points below are relevant in order to document the sources on which you have based the above proposal.

(a) First-hand knowledge. Describe:
A sociolinguistic survey was carried out among the Aninka speaking people back in 2017. Both Numana and Aninka wordlists were collected and compared to determine lexical similarity results between the two languages. The scores 44-48% and 40-44% indicate that Numana and Aninka are different languages. Also, the speakers of Numana strongly expressed socio-polical, cultural, and historical differences between speakers of Aninka and Numana. They strongly expressed during interviews, and even in emails that they should not be wrongly categorized as a Numana dialect. Again, they said that “…we are different from the Numana and we speak a separate language from Numana. Although some of us have learnt to speak Numana, but most of us don’t understand it”

(b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:

(c) Knowledge from published sources (please give complete bibliographical references):
Professor Abu Mallam, FNIP, B.Sc., PGDE, M.Sc. (ABU), PhD. (UNIABUJA) (Professor of Geophysics) Department of Physics, Faculty of Science, University of Abuja, Nigeria. *A Letter on the status of Aninka. 2020.*
The change proposal process

A request to change the code set goes through a six-step process:

1. A user of ISO 639-3 proposes a change and submits it to the ISO 639-3 Registration Authority (ISO 639-3/RA) using this form.
2. The ISO 639-3 registrar processes the change request to verify that the request is compatible with the criteria set forth in the standard and to ensure that the submitter has supplied all necessary information. This may involve rounds of interaction with the submitter.
3. When the change request proposal is complete in its documentation (including all associated New Code Requests), the change request is promoted to “Proposed Change” status and the ISO 639-3 registrar posts the request on the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA. Also at this time, an announcement is sent to anyone requesting notification of new proposals matching their specified criteria (region and/or language family of interest). Periodically, a message may be sent to the general LINGUIST discussion list on Linguist List (http://linguistlist.org/issues/index.html), and other appropriate discussion lists, inviting individuals to review and comment on pending proposals. Anyone may request from the ISO 639-3 registrar to receive notification regarding proposals involving languages in a specific region of the world or specific language family.
4. Individuals may send comments to the ISO 639-3 registrar for compilation. The consensus of early reviews may result in promotion to “Candidate Status” (with or without amendment), or withdrawal of the change request, if the conclusion is that the request is not in keeping with the stated criteria of the ISO 639-3 standard.
5. Three months prior to the end of the annual cycle of review and update, a new notice is posted on the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA, and an announcement listing the Candidate Status Change Requests is posted to the LINGUIST discussion list and other discussion lists, as requested by their owners. All change requests are then open to further review and comment by any interested party for a period of three months. A Change Request received after the start of Candidacy phase must wait until the next annual cycle for consideration. The purpose of this phase is to ensure that a minimum of three months is allotted for the review of every proposal.
6. At the end of the formal review period, a given Change Request may be: 1) adopted as a whole; 2) adopted in part (specific changes implicit in the whole Change Request may be adopted separately); 3) rejected as a whole; or 4) amended and resubmitted for the next review cycle. All change requests remain permanently archived at the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA.

Please return this form to:
ISO 639-3 Registrar
SIL International, Office of Language Information Systems
7500 West Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, Texas 75236 USA
E-mail: iso639-3@sil.org

An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.
Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers:


Linguist List. Constructed Languages. [http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfConstructedLgs.html](http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfConstructedLgs.html)